

(d) if so, the details thereof, district-wise, location-wise?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) to (d) Expansion of Telephone Exchanges as well as New Telephone Exchange are planned for each financial year. Detail for 1997-98 are not yet finalised.

Raising of Level of Platforms

943. SHRI SYDAIAH KOTA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to raise the level of Platforms after gauge conversion from Guntur to Macherla and Gunture to Nandyal;

(b) if so, the number of platforms raised so far after conversion in that sector; and

(c) the target set up for raising the remaining platforms?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, Sir, except the ones which have already been raised after Gauge Conversion.

(b) Three platforms on Guntur-Macherla section and two platforms on Guntur-Nandyal section have been raised.

(c) Does not arise.

ESI Scheme for Cashew Workers

944. SHRI V.M. SUDHEERAN : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the difficulties being faced by the Cashew workers in Kerala due to the stoppage of Employees State Insurance Scheme (ESI) for Cashew workers;

(b) whether the Government propose to take immediate steps to revoke such anti-labour decision and to ensure the benefits of the ESI scheme for the Cashew workers in Kerala; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) to (c) The Cashew workers working in Cashew factories covered under the ESI Act are entitled to ESI benefits as provided under the Scheme. However, a section of Cashew workers are not able to derive sickness benefit because of non-fulfilment of contributory conditions prescribed under the Scheme. The problem of such Cashew workers is under examination of the ESI Corporation. Meanwhile these workers continue to receive other benefits namely, medical benefit, disablement benefit, dependent benefit and maternity benefit under the ESI Scheme.

[Translation]

Mine Accidents

945. PROF. OMPAL SINGH NIDAR :
SHRI DATTA MEGHE :

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been considerable increase in Mine-accidents;

(b) if so, the number and details of Mine accidents reported during this year till date;

(c) the number of persons killed in these accidents;

(d) the amount of compensation given to the families of deceased;

(e) whether any scheme has been formulated for making the mining system more effective mobilising more resources for this sector and using better technology; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) to (f) Information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the house.

Revenue Earned by the Government

946. SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR SINGH : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the total revenue earned by the Government from the tourism sector;

(b) whether discriminatory attitude have been adopted by the Government in regard to development of the tourist places in Bihar; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA):

(a) The tax revenue earned by the Central Government by way of expenditure tax from tourists during the current financial year upto January 1997 is Rs. 226.93 crores.

(b) No Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Multinational Companies Willing to Invest in Communication

947. SHRI DATTA MEHGE : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether some multinational companies are willing to invest in communication sector in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have shown interest in their investment proposals; and

(d) if so, the details of the action being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) to (d) Government has permitted Foreign Investment in Telecom manufacturing, Value Added Services and Basic Telecom Services. A large number of foreign companies, including Multinationals,

have shown willingness to invest in the telecom sector.

The Government has approved 303 proposals in respect of Foreign Direct Investment of the order of Rs. 21770.653 crores during the period from 01/08/91 to 30/11/96. Details of foreign investment proposals cleared so are indicated below :

S.No.	Sector	No. of Approvals Accorded			Amount of FDI Approved
		Technical	Financial	Total	
1.	Basic and Cellular Mobile Telephone Service	1	80	81	18073.60
2.	Radio Paging	1	36	37	438.355
3.	Telecom Equipment Manufacturing and Other Value Added Services.	74	111	185	3258.698
		76	227	303	21770.653

[English]

Telephone Connections to Village Panchayats

948. SHRI B.L. SHANKAR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of village Panchayats which have been provided and those which have not been provided with telephone connections in the country as on December 31, 1996, State-wise;

(b) the target in this regard during the 8th five year plan, state-wise;

(c) whether it has been achieved;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the time by which all the village panchayats in the country are likely to be provided with telephone connections?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The state-wise details are given in the enclosed statement.

(b) to (e) In the 8th Plan formulation, all village panchayats were to be provided with public telephones. Subsequently, National Telecom Policy (NTP) 1994 stipulated that all the villages should have a public telephone by the year 1997. Since Panchayats were also included in villages, they were also to be covered.

The target could not be achieved. This target was to be achieved with the participation of private sector in Basic Telecommunication Services area which has been delayed. DoT also could not achieve its Annual Targets.

The Village Public Telephone connections are being provided progressively to all the villages which include Gram Panchayats also. During the IXth Plan period, all the villages are to be provided with a village public telephone (VPT).

Statement

S.No.	Circle	No. of Village Panchayats provided with telephone connection	No. of Village Panchayats not provided with telephone connections
1.	Andaman Nicobar	45	22
2.	Andhra Pradesh	17007	2526
3.	Assam	2080	45
4.	Bihar	8907	2885
5.	Gujarat	12163	1347
6.	Haryana	5338	608
7.	Himachal Pradesh	2480	442
8.	Jammu & Kashmir	740	721
9.	Karnataka	5340	331
10.	Kerala	982	Nil
11.	Madhya Pradesh	19226	11696
12.	Maharashtra	22249	2600
13.	North East	2286	2061
14.	Orissa	4973	288
15.	Punjab	8974	2769
16.	Rajasthan	8208	970
17.	Tamil Nadu	12994	181
18.	U.P. (E)	18493	32769
19.	U.P. (W)	10116	29063
20.	West Bengal	3189	30
21.	Calcutta Telephone	51	50

[Translation]

Increase in Number of Foreign Tourists

949. KUMARI UMA BHARATI : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been a phenomenal increase in the number of foreign tourists coming to India to visit world famous temples of Khajuraho during 1996;